



Workers flex their muscles while bosses and Labour mayor vent fury >>Page 20

TUBE STRIKE BRINGS CAPITAL TO HALT



Alistair Farrow meets restaurant workers fed up of serving up profits >>Pages 10&11

SLAVING AT THE STOVES OF THE RICH

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OUTRAGE AT COPS' 'ASSASSINATION' OF YASSAR YAQUB



PROTESTERS GATHERED at the M62 near Huddersfield on Monday to mark one week since police shot and killed Yassar Yaqub

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

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HEALTH SERVICE IN CRISIS HUNT MUST GO NOW



>>Page 2

LABOUR

No to retreat on freedom of movement

by NICK CLARK

LABOUR PARTY leader Jeremy Corbyn made a dangerous and serious concession to anti-migrant racism on Tuesday.

He said that Labour was “not wedded” to freedom of movement for migrants from the European Union (EU).

And in a series of interviews ahead of the widely-promoted speech he suggested that low pay is caused by migrant workers “undercutting wages”.

He told ITV's Good Morning Britain that, “migrant workers are recruited to undercut and undermine working conditions in this country.

“Some companies, particularly in the construction industry, are making a fortune



Corbyn and Len McCluskey

out of getting rid of workers in this country on one set of paying conditions and bringing in others to undercut them”.

Corbyn insisted that his new position on immigration was not a “sea change”.

But it's a big difference from his comments in June last year when he insisted Labour would “absolutely” defend free movement of EU workers.

The shift was part of Corbyn's attempt to relaunch himself as a “left wing populist”.

His concessions on migrants came alongside a welcome proposal to cap high earnings and bring in a £10 an hour minimum wage. These issues—and the NHS crisis—are

>>continued on page 4

Howl in fury against STP schemes to axe services

RESISTANCE TO the Tories' plans to trash NHS services across England is growing.

Their Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs), which divide England into 44 footprints, would slash hundreds of hospital departments.

They claim the STPs are necessary in order to improve patient care by "centralising" health services.

While it's true that some procedures are best done in large hubs, the Tories' plans are for wholesale cuts.

More than 30 GPs in Tower Hamlets in east London have signed an open letter calling for the STP plans to be halted.

It said, "We believe that it is not possible to 'save' £22 billion without severe cuts in service."

"The NHS is struggling to function as it is and it is a testament to all the staff who work in it that it still provides such an excellent service."

Formed

But resistance to the STPs is growing, with local groups being formed across England to oppose them.

More than nine councils, which have to sign off on the plans, have said they will not.

They include Labour-run Hammersmith and Fulham council in west London and Camden in north London.

A mass health campaign also forced Tory-run North Devon County Council to oppose its own government's plans. This shows the potential to beat back the Tories' assault.

Health campaigners are preparing for a "howl" of protest in central London, as part of building for a national demonstration on 4 March.

Join the Howl—Sat 28 Jan. Assemble at Old Palace Yard, Westminster, SW1A 0AA, from 12.30pm for a 1pm march to Parliament Square, followed by a march to Whitehall

#OUR NHS

**National Demonstration
Saturday 4 March**

12 noon, Tavistock Square,
London WC1 (nearest tubes
Russell Square and Euston)
for march on parliament

**DEFEND OUR NHS
NO CUTS • NO CLOSURES
NO PRIVATISATION**

The NHS is dying from a severe case of Tory cuts

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE BRITISH Red Cross declared a "humanitarian crisis" in the NHS after it was drafted in to stop the health service breaking down.

The charity was brought in to help East Midlands Ambulance Service on New Year's Day and it is supporting matrons at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth.

Tory prime minister Theresa May and top health bosses denied there was a humanitarian crisis, but were forced to admit the NHS was under "huge pressure".

Amy—not her real name—is an ambulance worker from north east London. She told Socialist Worker, "While the Red Cross already helped in some areas, there absolutely is a 'humanitarian crisis'."

"Accident and emergency departments are in meltdown—I've seen nurses crying on shift because the situation is so dire."

She added, "In London, some patients have to wait on ambulance trolleys for more than two hours before they even get into A&E. Patients are then left waiting to be seen when they are unwell and in pain."

This crisis claimed three lives at Worcestershire Royal Hospital last week. One patient died after waiting 35 hours for a hospital bed and another suffered a fatal aneurysm while waiting on a trolley.

Drip

A third patient was found dead on the hospital's Beech Ward after being strangled by their drip feed cord. The hospital has refused to comment on grounds of patient confidentiality.

The Tories are to blame for their deaths—and there will be more.

Years of budget cuts and privatisation have combined with the destruction of social care to create the perfect storm in the NHS.

May said that the NHS has a "five-year plan" to deal with the pressure. But the NHS England boss Simon Stevens' Forward View plan will not make up the lag in NHS funding—it will slash £22 billion by 2020.

And the NHS crisis will only be made worse by Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt's Sustainability and Transformation Plans (see column, left).

May tried to distract from this

HEALTH WORKERS protest against attacks on the NHS last year

crisis by hypocritically promising to "overhaul" mental health services.

But Amy said, "Because mental health services have been cut, people end up in accident and emergency departments."

"But that's after they've been left to reach crisis point."

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn rightly slammed the Tory-made "humanitarian crisis" and called on May to make a special statement to the House of Commons.

He should now be part of actively fighting the Tories' assault.

The People's Assembly called a Hunt Must Go protest in central London on Thursday.

And Health Campaigns Together has called a national demonstration in defence of the NHS on Saturday 4 March.

It is backed by the Unite union and the People's Assembly.

The Labour Party and other unions should support and build it.

More online...

How the Tories put the NHS in condition critical bit.ly/2jld99

NORTHERN IRELAND

Bad Monday for ruling coalition in the North

THE POWER sharing government in Northern Ireland has collapsed.

Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness resigned as deputy first minister on Monday, triggering an election.

Arlene Foster, the Democratic Unionist Party first minister, has been embroiled in a scandal over the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme (RHI).

The RHI was set up when Foster was in charge of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

It was designed to encourage businesses to switch from burning fossil fuels to wood biomass. But it paid out more than the fuel cost, meaning

users could earn more if they burned more. It is set to cost the Northern Ireland government £400 million.

People Before Profit assembly member Eamonn McCann said he was looking forward to a "ferocious election" during which the party will offer a real alternative.

He said, "We are not doomed to suffering a constant battle between a form of militant republicanism on the one hand and a form of militant unionism on the other forever."

He added that even if the government had resolved this crisis, "There would be another crisis coming along down the line."

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Protesters call for justice for man murdered by cops

by SADIE ROBINSON

ANGRY PROTESTERS blocked the M62 motorway on Monday evening to mark a week since police shot and killed Yassar Yaqub.

They marched down the dual carriageway to Huddersfield in West Yorkshire and protested outside Huddersfield police station.

Police shot Yassar after boxing in a car he was travelling in on the M62 near Huddersfield on Monday of last week.

The killing sparked protests in Huddersfield and Bradford. Ashiq Hussain is part of the anti-racist We Are Bradford group. He told Socialist Worker, "The coroner said Yassar was shot in the chest three times. Is it because he's Muslim? Is it because he's black? Absolutely. This was a race-related incident.

"They're saying it was pre-planned and we see it as a pre-planned assassination."

Hundreds of mourners gathered in Huddersfield last Friday for Yassar's funeral. Hundreds more joined a vigil two days before and more protesters demonstrated in Bradford last Tuesday.

Yassar's father Mohammed told the vigil that his son was "killed unlawfully".

Targeting

Martin Jones from Kirklees Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) was on the vigil. "Some people asked why the police were not using body cameras," he said. "Some asked if police were deliberately targeting Yassar."

Nearly 8,000 people joined a Facebook group, Justice 4 Mohammed Yassar Yaqub, within a week of his death.

Some explained to Socialist Worker why they are so angry. Faisal Mahmood asked, "How can they



PROTESTERS BLOCKED the motorway on Monday night

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

BACK STORY

Yassar Yaqub was killed by police on a motorway near Huddersfield

●Police claim they acted on a tip-off that Yassar had a gun. They failed to explain why this would justify shooting someone dead

●The mainstream media, including the Guardian, immediately carried anonymous reports that Yassar was a drug dealer

●It echoes the way Mark Duggan was denounced as a "gangster" after police killed him in Tottenham, north London, in 2011

shoot him without seeing a gun? It's murder." Raja Roop agreed. "It seems like the police murdered him and like they will attempt to cover it up."

Many pointed to the similarities between Yassar's killing and the police killing of Mark Duggan in Tottenham, north London, in 2011.

Ash Mahmood said, "Mark Duggan also posed no threat but was killed and police found not guilty.

"It's a joke."

Saeed Ahmed added, "Yesterday it was Mark Duggan, today it's Yassar Yaqub. Tomorrow it could be a member of our family, friends or even ourselves.

"In the Duggan case, there was talk

of police dropping a firearm at the crime scene. Is that what happened here?"

Bradford West Labour MP Naz Shah has appealed for calm. The toothless IPCC police watchdog is investigating, but campaigners will not stay quiet.

"Naz Shah has said, let the IPCC do its investigation," said Ashiq. "That's basically sweeping this under the carpet and saying do nothing for months.

"In 2009 they told us to keep quiet when the English Defence League came to protest. We said no, we need to speak up against this.

"We need to speak up now, too."

Fury at cops after death

THE KILLING of Yassar Yaqub has led to widespread anger at the police.

Stacie Murphy said, "They could have easily arrested him. There was no reason to shoot. His mum and dad have lost their only son. His kids have lost their dad."

Chloe Auty said she was "disgusted and scared that the police have the power to brutally kill a man with so little reason".

Blogger Desigirlrants told Socialist Worker Yassar's death had affected her because "he was a British-born

Muslim Pakistani and I identify with all the same labels".

She added, "Yassar's death has made me question my views on the British police.

"Since childhood I have always seen them in a positive light. I wanted to be a police woman once.

"But now I am frightened, thinking 'are the police anti-Muslim and anti-Asian?'

"When they look at me will they see a British-born Asian girl or a rotten Muslim?"



Yassar Yaqub

Stand Up To Racism trade union conference



●Saturday 4 February, 12 noon-5pm

NUT headquarters, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD

To register go to standuptoracism.org.uk

Racist rags start smear campaign

RIGHT WING newspapers leapt to help tarnish Yassar's name in the wake of the killing.

The Daily Telegraph ran a story on it under the headline, "'Stud badboy' shot on M62 by police used fast cars to launder profits from his drugs empire."

The Sun and other rags ran similar stories. They seemed to base their repeated descriptions of Yassar as a drug dealer on the claims of a single "former neighbour".

Muhammad Rizwan lives in Huddersfield and is a close friend of Yassar's family.

He told Socialist Worker, "The media is brainwashing people. They have published nonsense.

"The reality is that what happened is wrong. Yassar was a father—he was a nice person.

"We want answers and we want our voice to be heard. The public need to know what happened."

Emerged

Cops have claimed they were following Yassar because he was armed.

The day after the killing news "emerged" in the press that police had found a firearm in the car Yassar was killed in.

Yet many people asked why cops had followed Yassar for miles before stopping the car if he posed such a threat.

Ashiq said, "The media has talked a lot about drugs and Yassar's background. We're not interested in that.

"Whatever Yassar's background and whatever he's done has nothing to do with it. There are a lot of drug dealers around West Yorkshire.

"The police don't go around shooting them."

More online

Our full coverage of Yassar Yaqub's killing

Angry protests hit West Yorkshire after police killing of Yassar Yaqub
bit.ly/2iel5au

After Yassar Yaqub's funeral, protest called in Bradford over police 'assassination'
bit.ly/2iXYGg8

Plus more ...

socialistworker.co.uk



Backsliding over free movement helps right

As senior party figures attack migrants, Nick Clark argues that anti-racists must keep the pressure on Labour

>>>from front page

what Corbyn should have focused on.

His new rhetoric over freedom of movement has nothing to do with left wing politics. It is a significant concession to the pressure he has faced from high profile figures on the Labour right.

Labour Party deputy leader Tom Watson used an interview last Sunday to push Corbyn into taking a harder line on immigration.

Watson said he supported abandoning free movement for EU citizens.

Discriminates

This came as Labour MPs Stephen Kinnock and Emma Reynolds called for a “two-tier” migration system that discriminates against low paid migrants.

In an article for the Observer newspaper last weekend, Kinnock and Reynolds attacked anti-racists in the Labour Party who “claim the proponents of managed migration are ‘Ukip-lite’”.

Earlier that week the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on social integration blamed rising xenophobia on migrants’ failure to “integrate”.

The group, which is headed by



south London MP Chuka Umunna and includes ten other Labour MPs, proposed draconian measures to make life harder for migrants.

These included “regional visas” that restrict migrants to a particular area and limit their ability to move freely inside Britain.

Also included are compulsory English language exams and classes for new migrants—at a time when such classes face vicious cuts.

Then a letter from Unite union leader Len McCluskey appeared in the bosses’ Financial Times newspaper on Monday.

It said the paper had been correct



ANTI-RACIST CAMPAIGNS have mobilised tens of thousands of people on to the streets, and are more important than ever (above). Tom Watson (left)

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN AND JWYG/FLUHR

to identify “an increasingly Ukip party tone” from Gerard Coyne, one of his opponents in the coming general secretary election.

But McCluskey also wrote that he had raised the issue of changes to the freedom of movement well before Coyne had.

Corbyn’s concessions will still not be enough to satisfy those on the Labour right who want him to go much further and call for immigration controls.

Corbyn still says that he would prioritise remaining in the bosses’ single market over reducing immigration.

In a Sky News interview on Tuesday of this week he refused to say if he would back a cap on the numbers of migrants entering the country.

And he said he had “not formed an opinion” on Reynolds and Kinnock’s proposals for a two-tier immigration system.

Ahead of the speech some on the Labour right pointed out that, despite pandering to anti-migrant racism, it promised nothing. It simply said, “Changes to the way migration rules operate from the EU will be part of negotiations.”

Others attacked Corbyn for his

plans to limit high pay.

Whatever the careful—and sometimes confusing—formulas and the hesitations, Corbyn’s comments will embolden those who want to blame migrants for low wages, lack of affordable housing and struggling public services.

And they will encourage the Labour right to step up the pressure on Corbyn to make even more concessions.

On other pages...

Conference reaffirms commitment to anti-racism >>>Pages 6&7



Protesting outside the US embassy on the night of Trump's election

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Building the movement on the streets against racism

PROTESTS ARE planned in 20 towns and cities across Britain on Friday 20 January, including outside the US embassy in London.

These are called by Stand Up To Racism against Trump’s racist and sexist policies and his support for hard right groups. They are backed by other organisations including the Campaign Against Climate Change against his climate change denial.

These local protests are part of a programme of anti-racist activism building towards the mass demonstrations on 18 March.

The next key date for the

anti-racist movement will be the Stand Up To Racism trade union conference on Saturday 4 February.

The TUC has contacted all its member unions asking them to send delegates to the conference, and anti-racist activists are bringing groups from their workplaces.

As well as the protests on Friday night, other actions have been called including a Women’s March on Saturday 21 January in solidarity with one taking place that day in Washington DC.

For details go to bit.ly/2i8M09a

Refugees abandoned by the EU to freeze to death

REFUGEES ON the Greek island of Lesbos had their thin summer tents covered in snow this week, as a deadly cold spell swept across Europe.

Thousands are trapped there by a European Union (EU) deal with Turkey—and a Greek government dragging its feet on providing decent homes.

The Doctors Without Borders charity revealed that French cops were confiscating blankets from the hundreds who sleep rough in Paris after being driven from the Calais “jungle”.

Across Europe there are more than 11 million empty homes, yet people are driven to sleep rough. The result is death. One of the estimated 15 to 20 rough sleepers in Liverpool died on Thursday of last week.

And cruel border policies mean that refugees are among the most vulnerable.

Two Iraqi men and a Somali woman froze to death in Bulgaria crossing the mountains from Turkey. It followed the death from hypothermia of an Afghan man crossing the Evros river at Greece’s border.

Some 19 people including five children were hospitalised with hypothermia after being abandoned in the back of a lorry in Bavaria, southern Germany.

Migrants continue to resist—and many Europeans want



to help them.

Refugees in an Italian detention centre rioted last week after the death of a woman from the Ivory Coast.

And up to 300 people rallied in support of a French farmer on trial for helping migrants cross the border.

At an inquest into a death in the back of a lorry from Calais last year, coroner Christopher Morris concluded last week, “I’m unable to record a name for the deceased gentleman—a poignant tragedy given he was probably somebody’s brother, son and friend.”

But it’s a tragedy that will keep being repeated until refugees are welcomed to safety.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

SEIZE ON TORY SPLITS TO BUILD CLASS STRUGGLE

IN HER latest attempt to appear in control, prime minister Theresa May has unveiled her vision of the “shared society”.

This was designed to contrast with former prime minister David Cameron’s “big society”.

She hopes it will make good on her promise that Britain will work “not for the privileged few but for every one of us”.

Apparently a “shared society is one that doesn’t just value our individual rights but focuses rather more on the responsibilities we have to one another.

“A society that respects the bonds that we share as a union of people and nations.”

What empty nonsense. A government of and for millionaires is trying to pose as a friend of ordinary people.

As May was making the speech, the deep crisis in the NHS was coming to a head.

To try and distract from it she hypocritically promised to overhaul mental health services.

This is exactly the same pledge, in virtually the same words and using almost exactly the same money, that Cameron pledged in January 2016.

May’s speech was met by near-universal derision. Her government cannot escape from division and looming crises over Brexit.

The Tories are torn between bigotry and the demands of big business. Their friends in the City of London are determined to remain in the European Union’s (EU) neoliberal single market.

But that would mean keeping freedom of movement for EU migrants. And many Tory MPs and most of its voters see slashing immigration as the number one priority.

Last weekend these divisions once again surged to the surface.

“It’s going to blow up,” said one



Tory divisions could spill into open warfare after they trigger Article 50

STATE’S SPOOKY SCHEMES

IT HAS emerged that a government has been using a spy to plot to “take down” British ministers and politicians.

But the establishment doesn’t mind too much.

After all, there was an apology. Israeli ambassador Mark Reggev said, “The comments were made by a junior embassy employee who is not an Israeli diplomat, and who will be ending his term of employment shortly.”

Very polite but very odd.

The junior diplomat was the

Israeli embassy’s “senior political officer” Shia Masot. He was a major in the Israeli military before becoming “not an Israeli diplomat”.

He apparently works for the Ministry of Strategic Affairs.

He was taped with Maria Strizzolo, a British civil servant, discussing how to “take down” Tory minister Alan Duncan and other MPs who had been critical of Israel.

They discussed creating scandals targeting people on a “hit list”.

Strizzolo has resigned. She had

been an aide to Robert Halfon, a former director of Conservative Friends of Israel.

Masot was said to be keen on setting up and funding a number groups to back Israel.

The scheme includes plans to destabilise the Labour Party.

The government’s response is telling—no expulsions, no rattling of sabres nor threats of sanctions.

The Foreign Office said, “The UK has a strong relationship with Israel and we consider the matter closed.”



Umunna distracts from Labour's inaction

THE LABOUR right identified immigration as a key issue to undermine Jeremy Corbyn long ago. On Tuesday they made their breakthrough.

He bent to the claims that migrant labour “undercuts” workers’ wages.

There’s no evidence that migrants are to blame for falling wages.

In fact in the construction industry—which Corbyn singled out as a sector where migrants are used to

drive down pay—wages are actually rising.

Average weekly earnings in construction rose in every month last year.

In other industries where wages are falling it’s not because migrants are “undercutting” other workers.

It’s because bosses have forced through pay cuts and wage freezes for years and trade union organisation is too weak.

The only way to stop this

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

is if workers stand together and fight to stop bosses’ attacks.

Blaming one group of workers for undercutting another makes that task harder.

Fighting for a £10 an hour minimum wage for all workers—which Corbyn

has also rightly called for—and making sure it is strongly enforced—is a much better way to take on low-paying bosses.

Demands such as this, fought for in workplaces and on the streets, should be at the centre of a left wing programme for Brexit.

Unfortunately Corbyn’s only reason for not completely dropping his commitment to free movement is remaining in the bosses’ single market.

This single market doesn’t protect workers at all—its rules prevent nationalisation and have been used to stop strikes.

Corbyn’s new “left wing populism” won’t succeed by pandering to bosses and the racist right.

It has to be based on fighting to defend all workers—wherever they’re from. Corbyn’s victory as Labour leader gave us all a boost. We must push to reverse this retreat.

International Socialism 153

Josh Hollands on the US after the elections

Ghayath Naisse on lessons of the Syrian revolution

Judith Orr on the fight for abortion rights

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ANALYSIS
ALEX CALLINICOS



How the left can win amid global turmoil

LAST YEAR was remarkable. In some ways the election of Donald Trump in the US summarises many trends.

To understand it we have to go back to the financial crash of 2007/08. Ruling classes around the world prevented the kind of collapse seen in the 1930s. But because neoliberalism has made bosses so much richer, it is too good to abandon.

The recharged neoliberalism of the ruling class—austerity—hasn't solved the crisis. And the attempt to displace the cost of the crisis onto working class people has weakened the hold of the dominant ideology. This has led to voter revolts.

For a long time ordinary people have felt disdain for mainstream politics. The crisis has turned that into active hostility. Unfortunately the main beneficiaries are the right.

There have been movements on the left—such as Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, Bernie Sanders in the US and Jeremy Corbyn in Britain. But the right has been dominant.

We have to be precise about what we mean by the right. There's a lot of talk about fascism and there are fascist dangers.

We had the near miss of someone from the fascist Freedom Party nearly winning the Austrian presidential election. It's likely that Marine Le Pen will get into the second round of presidential elections in France this year.

But the dominant trend on the right internationally is the populist racist right, such as Ukip and Trump. Yet the advance of the populist right helps create an environment where it's easier for real fascists to flourish.

Global capitalism is drifting into even greater uncertainty and instability as a result of Trump's election. This should be a good situation for the left to offer an anti-capitalist alternative.

The truth is not so cheerful. Syriza and Podemos retreated and their supporters have shrunk.

The weakness of the radical left is one factor that has allowed the populist right to seize the initiative.

There is now a terrible danger of popular frontism. The idea is that as fascism is on the rampage, we need to unite with everyone who opposes it.

Dangerous

This is very dangerous. It means associating yourself with neoliberal policies that helped produce these revolts in the first place.

We need to offer an alternative to neoliberalism. We need to act, not on our own, but together with others.

Across Europe the International Socialist tendency has drawn a line in the sand and tried to build united mass movements against racism. In Britain Stand Up To Racism is crucial. Austerity has greatly strengthened racism and we have to fight them both. But racism is not simply one issue among others. Racism is increasingly the language that is used to frame all the other issues.

You can see that with Brexit. People voted to leave the European Union for all sorts of reasons. But what is the established view? It's all about racism.

Even sections of the left are conceding to arguments, such as over freedom of movement. The problem is amplified by the low level of struggle. And racist pressures are shaping debates in the unions.

Anti-racism is the best way in which we can relate to people who support Jeremy Corbyn. They don't exist on a significant scale in the branches and Constituency Labour Parties because these are dominated by the right wing.

And Momentum is being ripped apart by a factional struggle. Many Corbynites will be tempted to start running away from that.

A serious movement against racism can relate to substantial numbers of people inspired by Corbyn but who aren't involved in Labour because of how it operates.

We can only do that if we build a really broad Stand Up To Racism united mass movement.

Racism is the key link—the poison seeping deeper and deeper into British society. We're much better placed than any other section of the left to respond. We have to rise to the challenge.

This isn't staying on the sidelines. It's the way we move into the street of history.

This is an edited version of Alex's speech opening the SWP annual conference

Anti-racism frames the wider issues in politics

Revolutionaries debated the political situation and how to shape it at the 2017 Socialist Workers Party conference

THE THEMES of anti-racism and the Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) campaign ran through the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) annual conference last weekend.

Weyman Bennett from the SWP central committee said, "The fight against racism has become central."

He added that racism can be beaten. "The way the ruling class is using racism comes out of its own weakness," he argued.

He said the crisis of neo-liberalism meant people's living standards had been attacked—and our rulers have to find others to blame.

Weyman said, "We have SUTR not as a mass organisation.

"It has to be on the same scale as the Anti Nazi League in the 1970s."

Protests against Donald Trump on 20 January, a trade union conference on 4 February and mass demonstrations on 18 March can help build it.

Kate from Milton Keynes and Shanaz from north east London described organising vigils following racist attacks. "We brought people together who wouldn't have come together otherwise," Kate



STAND UP To Racism convoy to Calais

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

said. SUTR has jointly produced a pamphlet with the Muslim charity Mend against the Tories' Prevent strategy.

Several Muslim comrades said fighting Islamophobia gave confidence to Muslims.

Workplace

Trade unionists described building SUTR at work in councils, schools, the NHS and London Underground.

Liz said her Unison union branch had held SUTR stalls in Camden council's largest workplace.

"People are really glad we're doing it," she said. "And it's meant we've spent more time talking to union

members about other issues too."

Phil from South Yorkshire reported on the court victory of the Rotherham 12 anti-fascist protesters. He argued that the exoneration of Asian men by a mostly white, working class jury showed it was wrong to write off white workers as racist.

Gary from north London spoke about debates in the Black Lives Matter movement, such as the idea that people benefit from white privilege.

Student Antony added, "Identity politics come from a progressive place, but it can be very isolationist. We need to build a movement that can

pull away from that."

Delegates spoke about the specific role of socialists.

Carlo from Dundee said his UCU union had backed free movement of Labour. He said the presence of SWP members on the NEC helped push that through.

Jacek from north London said, "Labour and trade unions are divided on free movement. Therefore they are unable to provide leadership for anti-racist campaigners. The SWP is crucial."

Weyman agreed. "We have to seize the time," he said. "And offer a revolutionary alternative as well as fighting racism."

BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

We need strategic centres for socialist activity

AMY LEATHER, joint national secretary of the SWP introduced a session on building the party. She said, "What we do matters.

"The deep bitterness that exists at the elites can go to the right or the left.

"We have to intervene to pull that mood to the left."

Amy pointed out that much of the liberal left was "in despair" last year because they thought society was moving to the right.

But she described how the SWP had held successful rallies on "Is socialism possible?" and said many people are looking for an alternative.

Amy argued that local

KEY EVENTS

●20 January—protests against Donald Trump

●4 February—SUTR trade union conference

●4 March—national protest in London to defend the NHS

●18 March—SUTR anti-racism protests in London and Glasgow

branches are the "strategic unit" of the SWP. Speakers in the session said SWP branches had worked to strengthen campaigns.

Alexandra, a student from Queen Mary University in east

London said, "Every Friday our branch does a campaigning stall.

"Recently we did a petition against passport checks in the NHS.

"Everyone we meet is given a leaflet for Stand Up To Racism and is offered a copy of Socialist Worker. So we raise other issues as well."

Jenny from north London called for turning "stalls into street meetings". Jon from Portsmouth argued that we need "a burning hunger to grow the party".

He said, "We have to maximise the interactions we have with people and take Socialist Worker

wherever you go."

Chris from York described how newly established branches in Scarborough and Hull have helped build trade union support for an anti-fracking camp at Kirby Misperton.

Claire from north London said, "We need to be thinking about new members' education and re-examining our own ideas."

Joseph Choonara from the central committee announced that the SWP will hold a series of events across Britain to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1917 Russian Revolution this year.

FIGHTING AUSTERITY

Turn bitterness at Tories into hard hitting action

MARK L Thomas from the central committee introduced a discussion of politics in the workplaces. He said, "The level of strikes is low—this scandal has to be laid at the door at the union leaders."

But he added that workers are angry. And disputes such as the EIS union's pay strike in Scottish colleges showed the potential to fight and win.

Teacher Jess said socialists should call for national strikes. "If we don't at least raise the argument that strikes are the best way to fight then we are misleading people," she said.

Mark added, "We should not accept the Trade Union Act. We should defy it.

"We also have to argue it is possible to drive up strike ballot turnouts."

Bfawu union activist Steve said Socialist Worker's exposure of the use of zero hours contracts by a KFC contractor had enabled them to end it.

GMB union rep Bea from Sheffield stressed the role of regular union meetings.

She said, "They've taken us from a place where bosses ignored the union to where they are scared to do anything without us."

Organise

Pete, a PCS union member in Cardiff, said, "When it came to organise for strikes against privatisation, who were the first people I could turn to? People who I'd won to anti-racism."

Mark agreed that anti-racism can help "breathe life into union branches".

Delegates voted down a motion arguing that the SWP's analysis of the economy was too pessimistic.

They also voted to support Ian



AN EIS union picket line last year

Allinson in the Unite union's general secretary election (see page 16).

Julie Sherry from the central committee led off a discussion on fighting austerity and cuts, and defending the NHS.

She argued that SWP members have to be "alive to the opportunities for serious struggles to break out".

Julie added widespread opposition to attacks on the health service "is a major crisis area for the Tories, a very weak link—and the 4 March demonstration is a key date."

Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) will slash NHS departments and services across England.

Amy from north east London said, "The attacks on the NHS have been scattered, but now everywhere in England you'll have the STPs."

She argued this was an opportunity to unite the fight to defend the NHS.

Other delegates described organising against the Tories' Housing and Planning Act, against council cuts and against library closures.

STUDENTS

Potential for more growth

LEWIS NIELSEN from the central committee led off the discussion on students.

He argued that building Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) on campus can also "win a new layer of revolutionaries". He added, "If we don't have a strategy around students, it will be difficult to grow."

Students described how their Socialist Worker Student Society (SWSS) groups helped to organise SUTR groups on campus.

Stephanie from Queen Mary University in east London said, "A couple of us grabbed a bucket, some SUTR badges and a petition and went around the common room speaking to people."

"SUTR is a brilliant way to reach a wider demographic of people."

Many told of how they worked with other groups.

Bethan from Manchester University said, "The student union decided they were going to comply with the Prevent strategy.

"So we called a meeting and 35 people showed up—loads of them from the Islamic Society. We're now launching a campaign against Prevent."

Matteo, a student from central London, said, "Marxism hasn't been part of the intellectual vocabulary of students for years.

"There can be some hostility to Marxism.

"But a lot of the time we can win these arguments."

LGBT+

Responding to new challenges

SUE from the central committee led off a discussion on the fight for LGBT+ liberation. "The party responded very well to the Orlando night club massacre last June," she said.

"Through LGBT+ Against Islamophobia, which we helped launch a few years ago, we put out a statement.

"It argued that Muslims or Islam were not responsible for homophobia or transphobia and we had a good reception at the vigil in Soho."

A part of the discussion was how socialists should respond to arguments around trans issues.

Some argue to no platform feminists such as Julie Bindel,

who make transphobic arguments. Pat from Manchester said, "It's not the case that most people want to 'no platform' Julie Bindel, but it's the only option that's been presented.

"That's why we're organising our own meeting when she comes to Manchester to thrash out the issues.

Nicola from south London said, "A lot of people who are looking for answers are pulled by arguments around privilege theory and intersectionality.

"But when we argue our politics—in a way that understands where people are coming from—we can get a hearing."

ENVIRONMENT

Crucial year to stop fracking

CLIMATE ACTIVIST Martin from Manchester led off a session on climate change, fracking and the environment.

He said there was "enormous potential for protests and events around environmental questions".

These include plans to build a nuclear power station at Hinkley Point or add a new runway to Heathrow airport.

Kim from Scarborough said SWP members had to put class politics at

the heart of the climate movement. She described how an official local anti-fracking campaign had spent "thousands of pounds on a judicial review".

"We were continuing to build the mass campaign," she said.

"That meant we were instrumental in building a 1,500 strong demonstration in York."

She added, "2017 is going to be crucial. We either win or they're going to frack."

DEMOCRACY

THE CONFERENCE elected the leadership bodies of the SWP. The central committee, which leads the organisation on a daily basis, was elected unopposed.

Its members are Alex Callinicos, Amy Leather, Brian R, Charlie Kimber, Joseph Choonara, Judith O, Julie Sherry, Lewis Nielsen, Mark L Thomas, Michael Bradley, Sally Campbell, Sue C

and Weyman Bennett.

Conference voted for a national committee of 53 members to guide the party's work. Comrades made over 200 contributions from the floor.

Each session saw a number of comrades chosen to prepare a commission to reflect the discussion. These were open to amendment and then voted on.

'Trump will not keep us hiding in shadows'

The racist, sexist billionaire's election as president has galvanised opposition, says **Sadie Robinson**

HUNDREDS OF thousands of people are set to join protests in the US to mark the inauguration of Donald Trump as president next week. Demonstrations have been called for 20 January.

Organisers say a Women's March in Washington the following day could be 200,000-strong.

The march aims to "express to the new administration and Congress that women's rights are human rights and our power cannot be ignored".

Transport is booked from across the US to bring people to the protest—many of whom have never been on a demonstration before.

Heather is coming from Indiana. "It will be my first time marching for anything, anywhere," she said in a post on the protest's Facebook page. "But I can't wait to stand for equality with sisters and brothers from coast to coast!"

Cindy, another first time marcher, said there are "lots of first timers going that never did anything before".

Beth from Kentucky wrote, "I am 57 years old and never marched for anything. But the time has come to stand up for all the things that the Republicans want to ignore and put down."

Galvanised

The election of Trump, a racist, sexist billionaire, rightly sent shockwaves around the world. But it has also galvanised many more people into political activity to oppose him.

Eric Fretz, an activist with Brooklyn for Peace in New York, told Socialist Worker, "Trump's victory was a disappointing and important setback."

"His few stated policies and his outrageous cabinet picks strongly suggest his administration is going to be much worse,

ideologically and practically.

"But I have seen more people looking to enter activity after the shock of his election. I am confident it will lead to more people in the streets than under Barack Obama. There is a palpable new anger."

Over 50 rallies in around 20 states were set to take place this Saturday to defend migrant and refugee rights. Kica Matos from the Center for Community Change said activists would "have to use every tool in our arsenal" to push back Trump's racism.

Disobedience

"Is civil disobedience on the menu for what we will engage in?" she asked. "Eventually, it is unfortunately, likely."

A number of groups, including United We Dream, have come together to organise the protests. They will defend migrant and refugee rights, as well as opposing Islamophobia.

Kica said, "We want Trump to understand the might, the resilience and the power of our immigrant families and the immigrant rights movement."

Cristina Jimenez from United We Dream said Trump's threats to deport migrants "has generated fear throughout the immigrant community".

She added, "But we will not hide in the shadows."



Protesting against Trump's election victory

IN VERACRUZ state people rejecting a price hike helped themselves to gasoline instead

Mexico's 'gasolinazo' revolt

MASS protests and road blockades against a proposed 20 percent hike in fuel prices swept Mexico last week.

Tens of thousands have marched through major city centres.

Protesters have blocked roads and held sit-ins at petrol stations and even the main border crossing with the US at Tijuana.

This direct action has forced many stations to close.

In some areas this triggered shortages, which is piling pressure on hated president Enrique Pena Nieto.

Repression

The movement against the price hike—known as the "gasolinazo"—has been met with fierce

repression from the state, killing at least six people with hundreds of arrests.

The price hike, which will hit the poor hard, is a direct result of Pena Nieto's policy of privatising the state oil company and removing subsidies and price controls.

He is deeply unpopular and has few voices defending him these days.

EGYPT SOLIDARITY

A GROUP of leading trade unionists has released a statement condemning the latest attacks on workers' rights in Egypt.

Members of the national executive committees of the NUT, PCS, UCU and Bfawu unions were responding to the storming of the IFFCO factory in Suez on 3 January.

The statement also condemns the continuing attacks on bus workers in Cairo.

For details go to bit.ly/2i9uDDE

Israel launches a violent crackdown

by NICK CLARK

PALESTINIANS LIVING in occupied East Jerusalem fought back against a "crackdown" by Israeli forces on Sunday night after a Palestinian man killed four Israeli soldiers.

Palestinians clashed with Israeli troops as they carried out raids and set up roadblocks in East Jerusalem neighbourhoods.

Right wing Israeli settlers were allowed to march towards Palestinian areas under the protection of Israeli forces on the same night.

The clashes came after a young Palestinian man, Fadi al-Qunbar, drove a truck into



Binyamin Netanyahu

a group of Israeli soldiers at an illegal Israeli settlement in East Jerusalem. He killed four soldiers and wounded several others before he was shot

dead. It was a desperate act of resistance to the occupation that has made Palestinians' lives a misery for fifty years.

Israeli forces responded to the attack by collectively punishing Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

They also raided Al-Qunbar's home and arrested several members of his family.

Meanwhile Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu has called for Israeli soldier Elor Azaria to be pardoned.

Azaria was convicted of manslaughter by a military court last week after he shot a young Palestinian man in the head at point blank range as he lay wounded on the ground.

Help for refugees

I READ about the recent solidarity convoy to Calais (Socialist Worker, 14 December). Well done everyone. A friend who lives near Limoges in France told me of all of the work she and groups of friends are doing to help refugees.

She told me of the support that French people are giving to refugees. They are taking them into their homes, taking them on visits, giving them French lessons and helping to furnish the accommodation that they are given.

Ordinary people everywhere want to help.

Judy Chan
on Facebook

Fund babies not bombs

THE SCOTTISH government launched its Baby Boxes scheme last week that gives every expectant mother a box of start-up supplies for a new baby.

The most important part is actually the box where the baby should sleep for its first months of life—this is believed to be key to help reduce cot deaths.

A universal benefit costing £6 million, it is hoped it will help fight increasing child poverty.

Opposition politicians dismissed it as an expensive stunt at a time of cutbacks but it is also being piloted in parts of England.

The cost is negligible by comparison with the billions spent on Trident.

And many in Scotland would rather have their taxes spent on babies not bombs!

Margaret Woods
Glasgow

UN Israel resolution is worth shouting about

I WAS in Palestine last year and saw for myself the huge expansion of Israeli settlements (Socialist Worker, 4 January).

Israel has seized most of the Jordan Valley for the exclusive use of settlers and their farming industries.

Palestinian farmers who try to remain have concrete poured down their wells to deprive them of their livelihoods.

What good can the UN Security Council's recent

resolution do to reverse this?

It states that the land occupied by Israel since 1967 has no legal validity.

This has also been in resolutions in the past, which Israel has ignored.

But its reappearance is timely and could boost the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.

"Israeli" dates from the Jordan Valley could be no more.

Mary Brodwin
East London

Chopper close shave shows why offshore fight is needed

IF THE last two years hadn't been bad enough for offshore workers, then just before the turn of the year things got worse.

A helicopter shuttling workers between the Elgin and West Franklin platforms ran into difficulties resulting in the chopper coming inches away from falling into the sea.

The incident left severe gouges on the helideck of the Franklin platform and was a reminder of the dangers the workforce faces on a daily basis.

But safety costs money and we've seen those conditions become more and more dangerous as bosses cut maintenance, impose longer shift rotations and go for our terms and conditions.

Yet the only resistance has come from a small pocket of workers on Shell assets last year and a rank and file group called the Furies.

We are about to see another ballot, under the main OCA agreement, by the Unite and GMB unions.

The OCA has been traditionally considered a sweetheart deal. Unfortunately the unions involved don't seem concerned enough with bettering their dwindling members' terms and conditions.

Offshore catering workers, covered by another agreement, are set to be balloted on a pay freeze.

Partnership deals aren't what trade unions should be getting into with employers.

Why should we have a full-on

dispute over a small basic wage increase when clearly there are more pressing issues such as helicopter safety or the longer shift patterns bosses have imposed?

Maybe union officials can finally do something progressive and listen to their members and actually hold a coordinated dispute between the two agreements.

That could cause these oil companies some genuine disruption. The offshore workforce wants change.

The unions say educate the workforce. I say maybe it's the unions that need educating.

James Furie
Aberdeen

Nationalism won't beat the rail fat cats

I WAS disappointed to see a TSSA rail union video that highlights how European state-run rail companies profit from privatised railways in Britain being uncritically shared by the Labour left group Momentum.

This is because the video introduces us to a series of ordinary Europeans who thank us for this cash bonanza.

It looks like it blames them for our transport problems.

This is a dangerous



road for the labour movement to travel.

The people to blame are the politicians that privatised the railways—and refused to

renationalise them.

Ordinary Europeans aren't to blame—they should be the allies of British workers fighting for better services.

Workers in Europe have nothing in common with the bosses profiting from privatisation in Britain.

Rather than helping the fight for nationalised rail, this video risks undermining it, by pandering to a nationalist rhetoric.

Martin Empson
Manchester

Just a thought...

Well done Phil Scraton

JUST READ that Phil Scraton who headed the Hillsborough Independent Panel has turned down an OBE.

This is unlike some trade union leaders who grab these establishment trinkets with both hands. Shame on them!

Well done Phil.

Alan McShane
by email

Is DDO really that safe?

THE RIGHT wing press seem unable to read properly. They claim that driver only operation (DOO) has been declared safe and the rail unions are wrong.

But what the Office of Rail and Road said was that DOO "can be" safe "with suitable equipment, proper procedures, and competent staff in place".

This is exactly what Southern rail bosses haven't been doing.

Chris Marten
Littlehampton

Racist dies in prison

A MAN was doing a nine-month jail sentence for tying bacon to the door handles of a mosque in Bristol.

He also shouted racist abuse at a member of the mosque with his knuckle-dragging mates.

I note he died in prison just after Christmas.

What a shame.

Alec Provan
Fife

Loans selloff is just wrong

THE TORIES are at it again. Having failed a few years ago to sell off student loan debts they're talking about having another go at it.

The £12 billion privatisation of certain loans could be attractive to life insurance companies.

Yet many students can't afford to repay their debts for years or even decades.

And what's to stop any of the vulture firms that buy these loans from jacking up interest rates in the future?

The debt should be scrapped and higher education should be run as a free public service for all.

Michelle Coyne
Birmingham

SLAVING STOVES RICH at the of the

...AND YOU DON'T EVEN GET THE TIPS

Posh department store Harrods has got in hot water after waiters exposed it for taking their tips. But the practice is widespread across the catering industry—and it’s just one of many ways that bosses make life in the kitchens hell, catering workers told **Alistair Farrow**

BEHIND THE scenes at Britain’s swankiest restaurants, low paid workers are getting ripped off by their billionaire bosses.

Harrods, retailer to the filthy rich, just got caught out. The luxury London department store is in hot water after not paying workers in its 27 restaurants, bars and kitchens their full tips.

Restaurant workers said that management are keeping 75 percent of the service charge added on to the bill for the meal.

And Harrods is just the tip of the iceberg. Thousands of restaurants up and down Britain operate the same scam. And the workers know exactly



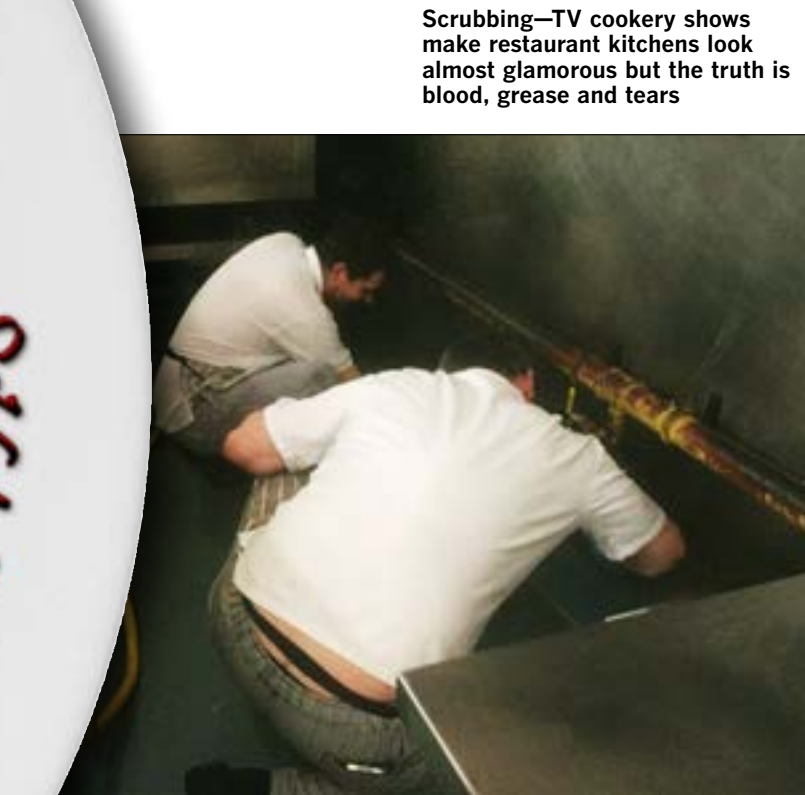
Table set for profit PICTURE: BRIAN MARCETTI

how much they’re being robbed of—because they’re the ones who have to add it all up.

Waiters at a London chain of clubs told Socialist Worker how they have to provide their own cash floats—meaning they have to calculate exactly how much they are taking off customers.

So they know how much they should be receiving in wages if the service charge were correctly accounted for. How much they actually get comes nowhere near.

The United Voices of the World (UVW) union, which represents workers at Harrods, has said that workers are missing out on £5,000 a year in tips. That’s a lot of money when you’re on poverty wages.



Scrubbing—TV cookery shows make restaurant kitchens look almost glamorous but the truth is blood, grease and tears

Hector worked as a waiter for a catering firm. Over the three years he worked for them, he received no sick pay or any guarantee of minimum hours.

“I was on no contract for the first three months—it was the same for all other workers. They told us it was a trial period, they might get rid of us after that.

“In the first week I worked close to 70 hours because I desperately needed a job. Some people work these hours every week.

“But no matter how long the shift was I only got one half hour break every 12 hours.”

Struggle

Hector’s payslips show that some months he would earn as little as £550. In London this is barely enough to cover rent and bills unless you share a room with several people, which many workers are forced to do.

While workers struggle to get by, the bosses are raking it in. Harrods’ turnover last year was £788.9 million with profits of £168 million. It paid over £100 million in dividends to its parent company.

In May last year Tory Sajid Javid, then business secretary, said that he would stamp out service charge abuses.

He said, “All discretionary payments for service should be received, in full, by workers where appropriate.”

But this was only after a series of protests outside Pizza Express and other chains forced the firm to pay workers the full amount of the service charge. And he dropped it as soon as it was out of the public eye.

Harrods has also said that it will find another way to distribute the charge after protests drew attention to their robbery.

But stealing service charges is nowhere near the limit of how far the bosses will go in their drive to squeeze profits out of workers.

They employ people on salaries, or pay by the shift, then add hours until

IT’S A FACT

- Caterers—cafes, restaurants and bars—made up **£29.1 billion** of Britain’s gross value added in 2015 or 7 percent.
- Over 150,000 firms at over 400,000 sites employed some **1,650,000** people.

workers are effectively being paid under the minimum wage (see right).

Across Britain people work in hot, windowless rooms sweating to produce fine food for the rich while their bodies break from bending over stoves for 12 hours a day or more.

“I feel like a fucking slave,” Francisco, a chef in central London, told Socialist Worker. “They say, come here, you do a job. Then you work, work, work until you’re kaput and then they throw you away.”

“There is bullying and racism every day in the kitchen,” he added. “Hard drugs are a big problem too. But then, how else are you supposed to work three double shifts in a row, each one 15 hours?”

To escape the kitchen, Francisco started work for the Deliveroo delivery company. But after fracturing his arm in an accident he was forced to go back. A doctor told him that he

would need his arm in a cast. But Francisco said, “I told the doctor, I have to choose between working and being homeless. I need to work so don’t put it in a cast, make a splint.

“I then went to work as an agency chef. It took months for my arm to heal. Because of this I will have problems with my bones when I am older.”

Catering workers are forced to work for long hours, sometimes finishing at 1am. This means the amount of time between shifts can be as little as six hours.

The legal minimum amount of time that companies are supposed to give people between shifts is 11 hours. This is completely ignored by restaurant bosses.

People are forced to accept brutal conditions and bullying management because there is no alternative. That is especially true for migrant workers.

Both Hector and Francisco described coming to London with no money and having to take the first job available out of desperation.

“As a migrant the pressures on you are different,” said Hector. “You have no safety net. I couldn’t speak English and had to take the first job I could find.”



The food is minimal—the price is astronomical

“I feel like a fucking slave. You work, work, work until you’re kaput and then they throw you away



Picking—much of the work is mundane, time consuming and soul destroying. PICTURE: BRIAN MARCETTI



Finishing—the end of service leaves workers exhausted and in pain. The tips have rolled in but they’ll see nothing of them

Unions need new restaurant recipe

THE TRONC system is used by bosses to pay workers under the minimum wage.

They can do this because service charges are a “compulsory charge”. That means that service charges usually show up on pay slips as regular wages—there’s no way to distinguish between the two.

Bosses claim that to process a service charge costs 25 percent of the charge.

Even taking that into account, some front of house workers Socialist Worker spoke to said that they should be getting up to £18 an hour.

And when it comes to chefs and kitchen staff, the picture is just as grim.

Chefs at an AA Rosette-rated restaurant just outside Manchester showed Socialist Worker weekly pay slips of as little as £266. This was for a 60-hour week. That effectively brings pay to less than £5 an hour.

And the story is the same across the industry. At one popular hotel franchise chefs are paid £20,000 a year for an average 40-hour week.

But they are then told to work over 60 hours a week, bringing their rate of pay to under the minimum wage.

Low trade union density in the industry and a culture of bullying mean that workers constantly fear for their jobs.

“You can’t say anything because they’ll sack you,” Chris told Socialist Worker. “Everyone’s scared for their job.”

The small size of restaurants and similar businesses means that organising is often difficult. A

Tronc tips system is tonic for the bosses

A TRONC is a system for centralising and then distributing tips that have been collected through customers paying a service charge on their bill rather than a cash tip.

It is organised by one person, almost always a manager, called a “tronicmaster”.

The UVW union which organises workers in Harrods has called for the “election of a committee to monitor, evaluate and report on the activities of the tronicmaster.” Even better would be to ensure workers get a decent wage without having to rely on tips to get by.

Because the service charge appears on a bill it counts as a “compulsory charge” and appears on pay slips as taxable income. There is no way for workers to know which part of their pay comes from Tronc and which is paid directly by the company.

Reductions

Neither the employer nor workers are liable to pay National Insurance Contributions on money received through the scheme.

This effectively means huge reductions in tax for managers. It also means that it’s in employers’ interests to pay as little as possible in actual wages and to make up as much pay as they can from the service charge.

But several high street chains and restaurants have started to cave in over their tipping practice after a sustained campaign by workers and their supporters.

2010 report shows that 80 percent of “restaurant establishments” employ less than 10 people. Only approximately 2 percent employ over 50 people.

Working in small workplaces often means close proximity to the boss—but it’s still possible to organise.

There have been successful strikes by small groups of workers in the past year. And Fast Food Rights and other campaigns have made great advances. The anger is there for people to get organised in the catering industry. People are already doing it in isolation.

Signing

Socialist Worker was told of workers taking letters to management at private members’ clubs in London, filing grievances and winning demands with little union backing.

It’s a scandal that some trade unions haven’t seriously organised in the industry.

When Hector organised workmates to go and see a Unite union rep they had to travel across London, taking the day off work. When they arrived at the office the rep told them there was nothing he could do.

“When we showed him our contracts he said, ‘I’m almost as angry at people for signing these contracts as I am at the employer for issuing them,’” Hector said.

It’s time for the trade union movement to start taking the millions of workers in the sector seriously.

Conditions and pay are brutal and need to change.

Some names have been changed to protect workers’ identities

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Is Europe moving to the right or left?

Wed 18 Jan, 6pm,
Belmont Cinema
Cafe, 49 Belmont St,
AB10 1JS

BARNSELEY

Is the US looking for a war with China?

Thu 19 Jan, 7pm,
YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

From coal mines to call centres—the working class today

Wed 18 Jan, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT
Centre, 38/40 Holloway
Circus, B1 1EQ

BOLTON

What do we mean by revolution?

Thu 19 Jan, 6.30pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St
(off Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

CAMBRIDGE

Abortion wars

Thu 19 Jan, 7.30pm,
River Lane Centre,
River Lane, CB5 8HP

ESSEX

The 1917 February Revolution in Russia

Thu 2 Feb, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford,
CM1 2QL

EXETER

Prospects for socialists in 2017

Thu 19 Jan, 6.30pm,
New Horizon Cafe,
47 Longbrook St, EX4 6AW

GLASGOW

The radical Robert Burns

Thu 19 Jan, 7pm,
Avant Garde, 33-44 King St,
Merchant City, G1 5QT

HUDDERSFIELD

Civil liberties under attack—do the police have a licence to kill?

Wed 18 Jan, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade
(near both train and bus
stations), HD1 5JP

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

The gig economy—is it changing the working class?

Thu 19 Jan, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LONDON: BRIXTON

Climate Change—why won't our leaders act?

Wed 18 Jan, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd
(facing Windrush Square),
SW2 1EP

SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS



Who is Donald Trump and how can he be stopped?

DUNDEE

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

LONDON: EALING

Prospects for socialists in 2017

Thu 19 Jan, 7.30pm,
Y Lounge,
YMCA West London,
25 St Mary's Rd,
W5 2RE

HULL

Thu 19 Jan, 7.30pm,
Cafe Licious, 104
Cottingham Rd,
HU6 7RZ

LONDON: HARINGEY

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd
(corner Vincent Rd),
N15 3QH

LONDON: HACKNEY

Will the trade union leaders ever lead a fight?

Thu 19 Jan, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

PORTSMOUTH

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St, PO5 4EZ

ST ALBANS

Thu 26 Jan, 7.30pm,
Trinity Church Hall (upstairs),
1 Beaconsfield Rd (near
St Albans City station),
AL1 3RD

LONDON: NEWHAM

Their democracy and ours

Wed 18 Jan, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove
(next to Morrisons
car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

The resistible rise of Marine Le Pen in France

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

Egypt—five years since the revolution

Wed 18 Jan, 7pm,
Chorlton Library (side
door), Manchester Rd,
M21 9PN

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

Is the media all powerful?

Thu 19 Jan, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

NORWICH

Is Europe moving to the right or left?

Thu 19 Jan, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

OXFORD

What would a socialist solution to the refugee crisis look like?

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Restore, Manzil Way
(off Cowley Rd), OX4 1YH

SCARBOROUGH

Marxism and art—John Berger on ways of seeing

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Tap and Spile, 94 Falsgrave Rd,
YO12 5AZ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

The role of the revolutionary paper

Thu 19 Jan, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible
Theatre), S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

Imperialism today

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Central Baptist Church Hall,
Devonshire Rd, SO15 2GY

SWANSEA

Prospects for socialists in 2017

Thu 19 Jan, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community
Centre, St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

TELFORD

Prospects for socialists in 2017

Thu 19 Jan, 7.30pm,
Carriages, The Parade,
Wellington,
TF1 1PY

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Prospects for socialists in 2017

Wed 25 Jan, 7.30pm,
Wild Bytes Cafe,
Darlington St,
WV1 4HW

YORK

Casualisation and zero hour contracts—the working class today

Wed 18 Jan, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

MOVEMENT EVENTS

Inaugurate resistance

Friday 20 January

Protests as Donald Trump takes office. Called by local Stand Up To Racism groups

BIRMINGHAM

5pm,
24-26 High St,
B4 7SL

BRISTOL

5:30pm,
The Fountains (opposite
the Hippodrome),
BS1 4UZ

DUNDEE

5:30pm,
City Square,
DD1 3BZ

EDINBURGH

5:30pm,
Wellington statue,
Princes St,
EH2 2AN

GLASGOW

5:30pm,
Donald Dewar Statue,
Buchanan St,
G1 2NG

LEEDS

5pm,
Dortmund Square,
LS2 8RE

LONDON

5pm,
US Embassy, 24
Grosvenor Square,
W1A 2LQ

MANCHESTER

6pm,
St Peters Square,
M2 3DF

NORWICH

4pm,
City Hall, St Peters St,
NR2 1NH

SHEFFIELD

5pm,
Sheffield Town Hall,
Pinstone St,
S1 2HH

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Email
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ELEANOR MARX
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From punk to Trump—a compelling introspective

Gee Vaucher's extensive body of work spanning 50 years reveals one of the best and most political collage artists of the century, writes **Jeff Jackson**

THIS EXHIBITION is quite simply compelling—as insightful as it is questioning, as intensive as it is humorous.

It encompasses examples of Gee Vaucher's artistic output over the last 50 years. By doing so it takes you into the world of a compassionate, angry, articulate and above all intensely skilful and accomplished artist.

It is not an overestimate to put her collage work on a par with some of the best collage artists of the last 100 years.

Looking at her work you think of German artists such as Hannah Hoch and John Heartfield, or the work of British artists such as Richard Hamilton or Leon Kuhn.

And indeed, like all good artists, she has studied the work of those who went before.

Style

But Vaucher crucially reinvents and reshapes style and technique to create her own unique voice.

Her paintings on show here are dominated by the 2006 series Portraits of Children Who Have Seen Too Much, Too Soon which are both exquisite and yet disturbing. They show an artist in full control of the medium that they are working in.

And yet on leaving them it is not the brilliance of the technique employed in creating them that stays with you.

It is the disturbing, off the canvas scene that the viewer cannot see.

It's what the child is seeing or has seen that haunts your thoughts.

The examples of her work with the punk anarchist band Crass are some of the most original, angry and provocative artistic expressions that



OH AMERICA by Gee Vaucher

the punk explosion had.

They bristle with a dismissive energy of those who run this rotten society.

They put two fingers up and say boldly to our rulers that we have seen through your charade and we are not

taking it any more. Space curtails developing detail of her book work and installations.

But as with the other mediums Vaucher works in they are both consummate in execution and thought provoking in subject.

Why then have most of us not heard or knowingly seen Gee Vaucher's work and what makes it so rewarding to view?

The answer to the first question lies somewhere in the fact that Vaucher has not sought fame and fortune as an artist.

Her work seems to be not just her own private practice, but a contribution to the society she inhabits and lives.

And it would be questionable that those who dominate the commercial art galleries and museum spaces would care much for its content.

Medium

To answer the second question we should look at how Vaucher combines her commitment to her art practice with her masterful control of the medium she chooses to work with.

She is constantly learning and mastering technique and tools for her artistic output alongside her powerful vision of the world.

Vaucher studied at South East Sussex Art College in the early 1960s.

She wrote of the time, "In those days working class people didn't really go to college. We were seen as factory fodder. The school I went to didn't even have any exams."

Luckily on Vaucher's trip to the Yardley's cosmetic factory in Stratford, where she was destined to work, she saw great open vats of eye shadow colour and lipstick.

It made her more determined to go to art school.

In words perhaps akin to her Crass work, thank fuck for that.

Gee Vaucher—Introspective. Firstsite Gallery, Colchester. Until 19 February

Revolting takes aim at Tory privatisation and cuts

TELEVISION

REVOLTING

BBC Two
Tuesdays at 10pm

THIS SKETCH show is pitched as "satirising the state of the nation".

One sketch has a go at Ukip and uncovers the nasty reality of the party perpetuating racist myths—and its defence of the death penalty.

There's also an excellent clip of a "hippie festival" celebrating multiculturalism and campaigning for

environmental and social justice. It exposes how liberal ideology is used to smear radicals, who are considered dangerous as they hit back at the violent order of capitalist society.

There is also an outstanding clip of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn at the Durham Miners' Gala. It shows the importance of working class support for Corbyn's leadership.

There are interviews showing how miners lost their homes during attacks from Margaret Thatcher's Tory government in the 1980s. The clip also shows



Revolting is anti-Tory

socialist memorabilia depicting hope and ideas of revolutionary Marxism within the industrial working class.

The first episode also sets forth the deep crisis in the NHS due to neoliberal attacks on the welfare state. It exposes Tory privatisation and how bosses have profited from the passenger misery, attacks on workers and union bashing in the Southern Rail dispute.

There is also a brilliant cut of the housing crisis caused by Theresa May's attacks aimed at social

cleansing of the poor with forced evictions.

We also see shadow chancellor John McDonnell attacking the greed of the corporate elites who evade taxes.

Controversially, the show makes a misguided attempt to expose the brutality of Isis. It shows the targeting and grooming of young Muslim women online. They are confronted with the reality and horrors of imperialist war in the Middle East and their contradictory roles under capitalism.

Ayesha Saleem

FILM

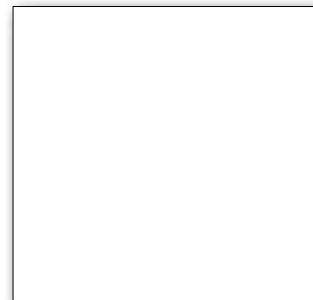
ABORTION RIGHTS SPECIAL SCREENING OF VERA DRAKE

Directed by Mike Leigh.
Saturday 21 January, 3-8pm.
Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Rd, London E1 6LA. Tickets are £15. Book at bit.ly/2j7L7tj and go to bit.ly/2jdMKtM for more info

FIFTY YEARS ago this year the 1967 Abortion Act came into force.

The Act doesn't guarantee a woman's right to choose. But it marked a huge step forward for women's rights.

The Abortion Rights campaign plans a series of events throughout the year to celebrate the Act—starting



Imelda Staunton as Vera Drake

with a special screening of Vera Drake.

Director Mike Leigh and actor Imelda Staunton will join a panel discussion following the screening.

EXHIBITION

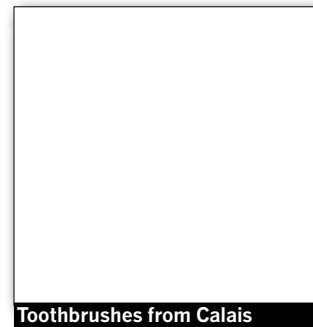
DZHANGAL

Gideon Mendel.
Autograph ABP, Rivington Place, London EC2A 3BA.
Until 11 February. Free

THIS EXHIBITION tells the story of the Calais refugee camp through photographs and objects.

Gideon Mendel first went to Calais to teach refugees photography.

He began taking pictures of, and collecting, discarded objects. Some, such as



Toothbrushes from Calais

toothbrushes, reflect mundane aspects of life

But teargas canisters highlight the repression that the refugees in Calais endured.

The exhibition can give a sense of the real humans who lived in Calais, as opposed to the "swarm" that certain politicians would rather we saw them as.

Go to autograph-abp.co.uk

LEADING left wingers claim controls on immigration are needed to protect workers.

Unite union leader Len McCluskey even dared cite the revolutionary Karl Marx to back up his argument.

“Let’s have no doubt—the free movement of labour is a class question,” McCluskey wrote in the Morning Star newspaper.

“Karl Marx identified that fact a long time ago.

“A study of the struggle waged by the British working class,” he wrote in 1867, ‘reveals that in order to oppose their workers, the employers either bring in workers from abroad or else transfer manufacture to countries where there is a cheap labour force.’”

It is a class question—of whether workers unite or turn on one another.

This isn’t the first time McCluskey has cited this misquote from an article Marx didn’t write. He used to include its next sentence, concluding that “given this state of affairs” workers’ organisations “must become international”.

Unlike Marx, McCluskey now calls for the national state to restrict the rights of workers abroad. His argument can sound like common sense but it is dangerously wrong.

Dangerously

McCluskey argued “If all you have to sell is your capacity to work, then its value is going to be affected by an influx of people willing to work for less money and put up with a lower standard of living.

“Supply and demand affects the sale of labour too, pitting worker against worker.”

This chimes with many low-paid workers’ experience. Bosses and agencies tell anyone who complains about pay and conditions that migrants are ready to take the job.

It’s in bosses’ interest to emphasise this “race to the bottom”. While it’s a real phenomenon, attempts to explain it in terms of immigration are wrong.

After 2000 there was both an increase in immigration from eastern Europe and attacks on workers’ living standards.

But the two aren’t linked. Real wages fell after the 2008 global crash—when net migration was slumping.

A more recent surge in immigration was partly fuelled by a mini-boom in construction. Wages in construction didn’t fall—they increased.

It’s true that “supply and demand” affects the fluctuations in any commodity’s price. That includes wages, the price of workers’ labour power. But that’s only half the story.

McCluskey’s argument assumes capitalism always needs the same amount of



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

MIGRANTS —PART OF OUR CLASS

As left wing figures claim that bringing down immigration is a working class question, Dave Sewell argues the choice is between workers uniting or turning on one another



Unite union head Len McCluskey

labour. If this were true then more workers could mean lower wages.

But a capitalist economy is driven to expand.

The number of jobs never stays fixed—it mostly goes up in between crises—and during crises it goes down.

The total UK workforce was 31.76 million in October last year. That’s down from 32.49 million in January 2014.

To manage these changes profitably, bosses need what



The number of jobs never stays fixed—it can go up as well as down

became known in the 1830s as a “reserve army of labour”. This is a mass of potential workers excluded from working.

Bosses can hire them quickly during the boom times, or try to make them compete with other workers and drive down wages during the bad times.

Marx’s ally Frederick Engels called this “the worst side of the present state of things in terms of its effect on the worker”.

He said it was “the sharpest weapon” of the bosses in his

book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844.

If any refused to accept the bosses’ terms “another is easily found in his place”.

Marx built on this in his masterwork *Capital*. He described how capitalism was the first system that had created a situation of “too many” workers.

He wrote that “a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis” and a “condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. “It forms a disposable industrial reserve army.”

Engels looked—in sometimes regrettable terms—at the presence of poor Irish immigrants. He wrote, “The rapid extension of English industry could not have taken place” without this “reserve at command.”

BUT THE two most important sources for new workers were peasants driven from the land and a level of population growth made possible by capitalist production.

So he also described how capitalism creates unemployment independently of immigration. When profits take off in a certain sector, bosses draw more people into the workforce so it can expand.

But profits can’t keep up with the expansion of production. When a crisis hits, bosses will often lay off these workers.

Marx showed that even when capitalism was expanding, bosses would lay off some workers.

To maintain their profits bosses invest in increasing productivity, for instance by buying more efficient machinery. This makes some workers surplus to requirements.

Higher productivity also cheapens the cost of living as commodity prices fall.

This means people can survive on lower wages—and be hired to do work that previously would have cost too much to be profitable.

So the workforce as a whole can expand even as some workers are sacked. Apologists for capitalism claim that those sacked can simply find new jobs elsewhere.

But the possibility to do this is limited, even outside general economic crises where new jobs are scarce.

Newly redundant workers, often with skills and experiences from shrinking industries, can be less attractive to bosses than new, inexperienced workers they can pay less.

Again, it is in the bosses’ interest to exaggerate this. Often bosses avoid getting rid of highly-skilled workers, even during recessions.

But it does mean that even when the system is short of workers, it banishes thousands to the scrapheap of unemployment.

For the ruling class, the reserve army of labour presents a problem. They want to keep enough people strong enough to be ready for work, but desperate enough to take it.

Compete

Engels described such tensions over the Poor Laws in the 1800s. The same arguments shape today’s cruel welfare reforms. It’s not about helping people find work but driving them to compete for it.

Excluding more migrants from claiming benefits would only sharpen that desperation.

For the working class, the question is one of unity. Do those with jobs fight to lock out those who might be used to undercut them—or to organise alongside them?

Marx answered by urging workers to “organise a regular cooperation between employed and unemployed in order to destroy or weaken the ruinous effects of this law of capitalistic production on their class”.

A superficial look at figures can make the reserve army seem bigger than it is. Many workers, migrant or not, soon become integral to the workforce.

The NHS and many private firms would collapse if all migrant workers were laid off.

When women began to enter the workplace, many bosses hired them because they could pay them less. Shamefully, some trade unionists argued for keeping them out to protect men’s wages.

Yet today only the worst reactionaries argue against women workers, who are now an essential part of both the bosses’ economy and the workers’ movement.

Those people who are underemployed—working fewer hours than they want to—and the under-25s who have a lower minimum wage, can be seen as a threat to wages.

Yet no serious trade unionist calls for excluding them.

The fight is to win them better rights.

To argue that it’s different when it comes to migrants only reinforces myths that help the bosses.

Karl Marx identified that fact a long time ago. “The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor,” he



FILIPINO nurses protest against racist scapegoating in 2015 (top) and London bus workers from across the world unite on the picket line during the same year

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

wrote in 1870. “This antagonism is kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers—in short by all the means at the disposal to the ruling class.”

He called it “the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power”.

Overcoming that power is the real class question.

Those migrants who do work for lower wages don’t do so out of choice.

State repression, racist discrimination and divisions among workers make them more vulnerable. Addressing that means opposing immigration controls—not giving them left cover.

READ MORE

● **The Condition of the Working Class in England** Frederick Engels, £10.99

● **Immigration—The Myths Spread to Divide Us** by Charlie Kimber, £2

● **How Asians transformed the British working class** by Yuri Prasad www.isj.org.uk/here-to-stay-here-to-fight/

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



Was Russia too backward for a socialist revolution?

The Russian working class was a minority in a backward society, but it wielded power disproportionate to its small size

BEFORE THE Russian Revolution in 1917, most socialists argued that a socialist revolution could only take place in the developed Western countries.

They said backward Russia first needed a “bourgeois revolution” so capitalism could develop.

But by the late 19th century capitalism was in the process of becoming a global system. Nowhere was off limits for capitalist expansion—and Russia was no exception.

The Tsarist dictatorship was too powerful for capitalism to be forced on it directly. But capital flooded in nevertheless, finding its way to Russian cities through foreign investment.

Massive factories were built in the midst of a largely feudal society.

People flocked to the cities to find work. At the start of the 19th century, Russia’s urban population was just over 1,600,000 or 4.4 percent of the total population.

Exploded

By 1897 it had grown to almost 16,300,000 or 13 percent of the total population.

While capitalism was bursting onto the scene in cities, the rest of the country remained largely undeveloped. But it was not untouched by the process.

One 1897 estimate puts the working class at 22 million out of a population of 125 million. Despite the industrial boom it was still a minority, but a significant one.

Production was increasingly centred around the cities and the countryside followed their lead.

Factories with over 1,000 workers grew far more rapidly in number, productive capacity and workforce than smaller ones.

Russia’s productive capacity



FACTORY PRODUCTION exploded in Russia’s cities

1917 TIMELINE

14 January 1917

● Russian troops defend Riga against a German offensive (Northern front), while on the Romanian (Central) front troops retreat after a fresh defeat

● Morale is low. The vast majority of soldiers do not believe in annexing more territory for Russia

● Some 1.5 million soldiers deserted the army in 1916

of bourgeois democracy.”

Alongside its rapid creation, the Russian working class did not have to go through the process of learning about basic left ideas. It could jump to advanced socialist ones.

Combined

But because the working class was small, it needed the peasantry—the majority—to help carry a revolution through.

Trotsky later applied this theory of “uneven and combined” development to the system as a whole.

The uneven development between the cities and the countryside in Russia was mirrored on a world scale. There was a similar contradiction between the system’s central states—France, Germany and Britain—and peripheral economies.

Because of the uneven way capitalism developed, the comparatively small working class in these countries wielded power disproportionate to their size.

But these peripheral countries also combined with advanced states to form the world capitalist system as a whole. The working class in advanced states had to join with those in the peripheral ones to carry through the revolutionary process on an international scale.

The revolution could not hold out in isolation, a point that was tragically proven in Russia. That’s why internationalism is not simply a nice idea—it is a necessity.

Support Ian Allinson for Unite leader

THE SOCIALIST Workers Party (SWP) has decided to support grassroots socialist challenger Ian Allinson in the Unite union's general secretary election.

Allinson has led a series of strikes at his workplace, Fujitsu in Manchester—and is out again this week (see page 19).

He has also made the defence of immigrants' rights and free movement of labour central to his campaign.

Current general secretary Len McCluskey triggered the election by resigning last month. It is the second time he has called a snap election to help himself hold the position as long as possible.

McCluskey is a towering figure on the Labour left, and the right is eager to topple him.

Regional official Gerard Coyne is the candidate of the Labour right and the bosses' Financial Times newspaper.

He wants to distance Unite from Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, and calls for tough immigration controls.

Many socialists will wish



IAN ALLINSON (left) and the Fujitsu picket line (right)



to defend McCluskey's leadership to prevent such a step backwards.

In his campaign video McCluskey boasts of leading a "fighting back union" to galvanise that support.

But his reign has too often been defined by manoeuvres and compromises.

Unite wasn't much of a fighting back union when

Grangemouth boss Jim Ratcliffe put a gun to workers' heads.

Prepared

The same was true when Tata Steel prepared to throw whole steel plants on the scrapheap.

It's important for socialists in the union to argue that these defeats aren't

inevitable. Workers can fight back, and their union should be rallying them to do so.

On his campaign website, Allinson wrote, "It is essential that this election does not become a battle between Len McCluskey, offering more of the same, and Gerard Coyne, offering to turn the clock back to the bad old days when our union backed New Labour

even while they attacked our own members."

Many will want to ensure a Corbyn supporter isn't driven out of leading Britain's biggest union.

But those who want to promote Corbyn's politics would do better to look to Allinson.

McCluskey's support for Corbyn is unreliable. He pressured him not to appoint left winger John McDonnell as shadow chancellor—and to support renewing Trident nuclear weapons.

Raised

And in a recent interview he raised the possibility of Corbyn having to resign before 2020 to reverse Labour's decline in the polls.

McCluskey has to his credit put Unite's support behind anti-racist initiatives and backed anti-racist demonstrations.

But his response to a race to the right on immigration has been to make dangerous concessions.

And as the scapegoating of immigrants poisons

British politics and society, we need unions to stand firm against it. Workers can only win when they stand united.

The SWP remains committed to working alongside McCluskey and others in the union leadership.

But we believe it is important to put forward a real alternative and win workers to supporting it.

Unfortunately the election's arbitrary timing makes this difficult.

Candidates have only a one-month window to win nominations from 50 branches.

Without the resources, connections and media support that McCluskey and Coyne enjoy, it will take a real push to get Allinson on the ballot paper.

So it is urgent that Unite activists waste no time in making sure their branches arrange nomination meetings and put forward a grassroots socialist candidate.

Ten ways you can support Ian Allinson's campaign
bit.ly/2i8kDXH

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Crisis gives more cream to fat cat billionaires

For all the whining about Brexit, the rich have got richer since the crisis began, says **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

REVELATIONS ABOUT how much bosses are creaming from workers caused outrage on “Fat Cat Wednesday” last week.

By midday last Wednesday, they had raked in more than a workers’ average annual salary (see right).

But bosses’ rocketing pay is just one example of how the super-rich are doing well out of the global crisis. Sales for planes, yachts and fancy cars surged last year.

Luxury car manufacturer Bentley’s sales were up more than 40 percent—largely due to its new Bentayga model, marketed at £160,000.

The super-rich spent over £2 billion commissioning “superyachts” in 2015 and bought 254 last year, up from 184 in 2010.

Despite the scaremongering around Brexit, Britain’s capitalists have been able to protect and grow their fortunes.

Fifteen of Britain’s wealthiest lost a staggering £4.3 billion in the wake of Brexit last June.

But what’s more staggering is that they had largely recouped their losses within three months.

The initial hit was largely because many rely on the City of London financial district.

Some 14.3 percent of what are known as “high net worth individuals” get their money from banking.

Gamble

When their friends gamble on the market, their wealth can be hit by sharp but often short term fluctuations.

But British bosses still have access to key European Union markets to boost their profits and wealth.

The FTSE 100 index of top firms recovered after just two days of trading after Brexit.

The FTSE 250 index, which is made up of more British-based firms, was back to normal after just over a month.

This didn’t stop right wing rags bemoaning how the rich had lost out since the 2008 credit crunch.

BACK STORY

Britain’s bosses like to paint themselves as suffering as a result of the economic crisis

● It’s true that a few have become less wealthy since the 2008 credit crunch

● The wealth of those on the rich list was £250 billion in 2005

● Yet by 2015, after a deep economic crisis, this had more than doubled to £547 billion

● Some of the richest lost out after Brexit—but they quickly recouped their losses

When the last Sunday Times Rich List was published last April, it claimed that Britain’s super-rich had been worst affected by the crisis.

But just focusing on a few individual capitalists who may lose out in the short term doesn’t give the full picture.

With competition at capitalism’s heart, new capitalists can rise to the top and push others out.

But the list still includes a range from the landed aristocracy’s old families to new bankers and hedge fund managers.

Before the crisis in 2005 the wealth of those on the rich list stood at £250 billion, not counting what’s in their bank accounts.

Some ten years later—after one of capitalism’s biggest crises—it had more than doubled to £547 billion.

Indeed, the richest have seen their wealth soar since the beginning of the century while workers have lost out.

The top 1 percent have grabbed a quarter of the £4 trillion that was added to national wealth since 2000—wealth that workers made.

It’s time we commandeered the superyachts and threw the rich overboard.

On other pages...
Slaving at the stoves of the rich
>>Pages 10&11

WHILE THE rich plead poverty, sales of luxury cars, planes and superyachts such as the Cleopatra (above and left) are on the rise

‘We’re worth it!’ say bosses who swipe 129 times more money than workers

BILLIONAIRE BOSS Sir Martin Sorrell boasted that he is “worth every penny I’m paid”.

He batted off criticism at the CBI bosses’ conference last year, bragging that if it’s a crime to be successful, he’s guilty.

As head of PR firm WPP, his total remuneration is worth some £70 million.

Sorrell is just one of many bosses who have continued to see their total income increase despite the crisis.

According to the High Pay Centre think tank the average FTSE 100 boss grabs more than £1,000 an hour.

That means that they surpassed the UK average annual salary of £28,200 by midday last Wednesday.

The typical fat cat will “earn” 129 more than their workers. In reality, the gap is likely to be worse.

Calculations for the average salary are based on “average income”, which is skewed upwards because it includes the pay of top bosses.

According to the Office for National Statistics the actual average income of households with

two adults is £23,556.

Across the year the average pay of a FTSE 100 boss works out at around £5.48 million—401 times that of a worker on the minimum wage.

That’s 172 times more than a nurse’s pay and 145 times more than a teacher’s pay.

In contrast to the bosses, workers’ pay has stagnated since the crisis began.

Between 2007 and 2015 real wages—taking inflation into account—fell by 10.4 percent in Britain.

The only country within the OECD rich nations’ group that has seen a sharper drop in workers’ wages is Greece.

It has suffered a more profound crisis and the European Union has imposed brutal austerity on ordinary people there.

Ongoing public sector wage freezes have contributed to the gap between rich and poor.

The situation isn’t much better in the private sector.

There, bosses have tried to keep pay down partly to avoid sacking skilled workers.

The average wage rise in the private sector was just 1.3 percent in 2016.

Ben Willmott from the bosses’ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has warned that workers will be even worse off this year.

“Higher inflation in 2017 will mean many workers will face a pay squeeze at a time when FTSE 100 CEO pay is already 129 times that of the average employee,” he said.

ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

A fat cat has eyes only for profit

IN BRIEF

Unions go nuclear in pensions fight

FIVE UNIONS agreed on Monday to ballot 16,000 workers in the nuclear power industry to defend pensions.

The workers decommission old nuclear sites and process and transport nuclear waste.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority bosses have begun a consultation on pensions. The Treasury hopes to slash £660 million from workers' retirement income.

The GMB, Unite, Prospect, Aslef and TSSA unions said strikes could start by March.

Nazis have a wet weekend in Kent

MORE THAN 40 anti-fascists defied fewer than 20 Nazis who turned up over two hours late in Kent on Saturday.

The fascist South East Alliance had called a protest against the redevelopment of a small mosque in Maidstone.

Kent Anti-Racism Network occupied the pavement, leaving Nazis to huddle under a hoarding across the main road. The mosque supplied hot drinks and pizza to anti-fascists as Nazis stood miserably in the drizzle.

Steve Wilkins

Picturehouse strikes again?

WORKERS AT three London Picturehouse cinemas have voted to continue their campaign for the living wage and other demands last week.

Bectu union members at The Ritzy in Brixton, Picturehouse Central near to Piccadilly Circus and Hackney Picturehouse took part.

Turnout was 77 percent with a 97 percent vote for continuing the action.

Racist Ukip isn't welcome in Bolton

ANTI-RACISTS WILL protest against Ukip in Bolton next month as it holds its spring conference in the town.

The conference will take place at the Macron Stadium on 17 and 18 February.

Councils face fury over latest cuts

TOWER HAMLETS Unison union members and supporters were set to protest on Tuesday against the east London Labour council's proposed £58 million cuts.

Immediate cuts include £1.8 million slashed from the youth service with layoffs for most workers, privatisation of day nurseries and a 9 percent cut to adult social care.

Unison has told councillors it will not agree to negotiate down or away any benefits.

■CAMPAIGNERS ARE set to protest against mental health cuts in Birmingham on Monday of next week. They will gather outside the City Council House from 10:30am.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT



SCHOOL JANITORS and IT workers at Glasgow city council both continued their strikes this week over pay and privatisation. They are members of the Unison union. Send messages of solidarity to enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

HOUSING CAMPAIGNS

Can charity sit-in beat Aylesbury wreckers?

by ALISTAIR FARROW

ACTIVISTS AND residents have occupied the Thurlow Lodge community hall on the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, south London.

It houses the charity Divine Rescue, which provides food, advice and education to homeless people.

Southwark council issued a notice for the charity to vacate the hall, despite having paid their rent in advance.

Demolish

Labour councillors want to demolish and “regenerate” the Aylesbury estate—making a mint for their developer pals but worsening the dire shortage of council housing.

Service user Daniel told Socialist Worker that taking the charity's space away would devastate the lives of those who need it. “I rely on the service here,” he said.

Valerie Msoni, who works for Divine Rescue, told

TAKE PART

Visit the occupation at 1 Thurlow St, London SE17 2US

●Saturday 14 January, 3pm—Solidarity Tea Party with music and fun

●Sunday 15 January, 6:30pm—public meeting

Socialist Worker the council has wanted them out for a long time. “We were told we would have to leave in October,” she said. “Then they sent a letter saying we had to be out by 5 January.”

Over two years the council has made their work harder and harder. Volunteers and service users were “stopped from using the kitchen.” Homeless people were forced to eat next to bins.

The occupation group announced on Sunday after a 40-strong public meeting that any representative of Southwark council would be refused access to the hall.

So would housing association Notting Hill Homes or the Creation Trust charity set up to promote the regeneration.

The regeneration has already seen residents kicked out of their homes and many priced out of London.

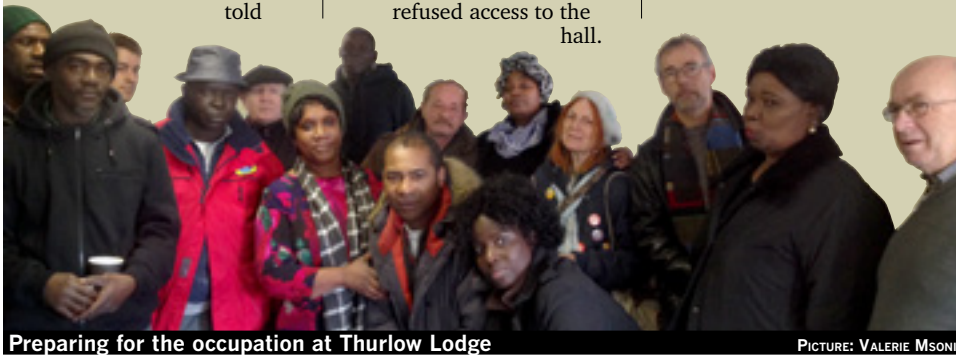
Overtaken

But the council's plan has hit a snag. The compulsory purchase orders issued to eight leaseholders were overturned, then an appeal was rejected.

Now the occupation is throwing a new spanner in the works. Messages of support have flooded in from trade unionists and housing campaigns.

Barry Duckett from the Canada Estate Tenants and Residents Association (TRA), said the eviction was “another way of undermining the TRA movement in Southwark.”

“It takes years for us to build a community yet minutes at a council meeting to destroy it.”



Preparing for the occupation at Thurlow Lodge

PICTURE: VALERIE MSONI

HOUSING ACT

Axeman Barwell can't hide from us

HOUSING CAMPAIGNERS took the fight against the Housing and Planning Act to Tory housing minister Gavin Barwell's constituency of Croydon Central in south London last Saturday.

They collected signatures

of people who want to get involved in the campaign and organise against Barwell on his home turf. He has a majority of 165 just votes.

The Axe The Housing Act campaign is holding a national planning meeting

this Saturday. Campaigning has beaten some of the act's measures and delayed its rollout, but the Tories are still pushing it.

●11am, Unite House, 128 Theobald's Rd, London WC1X 8TN

Southern rail safety strike



>>>continued from page 20

by the Tories to go to war with the unions and set an example to other rail bosses. It has used a combination of lies, victimisation and the Tory anti-union laws to undermine industrial action and get rid of train guards.

DOO means drivers have sole safety responsibility for a train and its passengers.

Tosh said, “Our members have been telling us for years that DOO is getting harder and less safe as more and more technology is brought into the drivers' cab. There's too much to do now and it's getting less safe.”

Bosses argue that 30 percent of trains in Britain are DOO and have been for decades. This is true—but it was introduced for shorter trains with much lower passenger numbers.

Safety

And the obvious point to make is the majority, 70 percent, are not DOO and have a second safety critical member of staff on-board. But the Tories are on a mission to change this and hand £350 million to rail fat cats by making driver only operation the default.

Transport officials and rail bosses are in cahoots to push this through.

Last week the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) regulator released a report on DOO. Govia boss Charles Horton claimed it “confirms that our roll-out

programme is safe”.

But this was just the latest in a long line of lies from Govia.

HM Chief Inspector of Railways, Ian Prosser, was careful to say that DOO “can be” operated safely “with suitable equipment, proper procedures, and competent staff in place”.

And he certainly did not say DOO is the safest way to run trains.

By accepting ORR's key recommendations, including better lit platforms and improved CCTV images, Govia effectively admitted its imposition of new DOO routes is unsafe.

This didn't stop the right wing Evening Standard newspaper declaring it “safe” and arguing that “legislation to prevent strikes should be brought forward as a matter of necessity”.

As station platforms and trains get busier and more overcrowded, deliberately obscuring the real safety issues helps no one but the bosses.

Even Govia's latest “Train Crew Matters” booklet for staff underlines how dangerous its safety cuts are. It states that across Britain “in the last five years, 19 people have been killed and over 7,000 injured around the edge of station platforms”.

As Tosh argued, “What they should be doing is listening to the people at the coalface who are saying DOO is getting less and less safe and we're taking more and more risks.”

Rail workers are fighting for everyone who uses the railways—back their fight.

And at the same time we need to redouble the fight to take back the railways from private firms that put profit first.

BA cabin crew strike back

>>>continued from page 20

they're afraid of us.” Over 800 workers have joined Unite since it announced that it would organise industrial action.

Bosses told workers they could only receive the pay rise if they declared they were not a union member, then removed strikers' travel discount.

Bosses had to cancel dozens of flights.

Others flew without food service due to low staffing, or were expensively chartered from other airlines. Unite cancelled a planned strike over Christmas to ballot workers on a tweaked offer. They rejected it by 70 percent.

When union officials sought to defer action, bosses forced their hands by refusing to grant Unite an extension

on its ballot before the legal 28-day deadline.

Sam said, “The choice was either take action now or forget it.”

After Unite blinked first in a bitter dispute in 2010, BA expanded its “mixed fleet” of workers on lower pay.

Sam was optimistic. “They can't afford to go on chartering planes like this, but we can take more strike days,” he said. “More people will join us.”

If these determined workers can humble the giant BA, it will boost resistance to low pay across the private sector.

Every trade unionist must get behind them.

●To send messages of support, for details of rallies and to donate to the fighting fund go to bit.ly/2iAp2Ea

ENVIRONMENT

Activists take fight to fracking bosses

by DAVE SEWELL

FRACKING company Cuadrilla began building its new drilling site at Preston New Road near Blackpool, Lancashire, last week—and local activists are already resisting.

The Tories hope to make it the first of many fracking operations in Britain.

Hot on Cuadrilla's heels, Third Energy is preparing to frack at Kirby Misperton in Ryedale, North Yorkshire. (see right).

Anti-fracking "Nana" Tina Louise Rothery from Lancashire told Socialist Worker, "Cuadrilla was supposed to liaise with the community before starting."

"But the first we heard about it was a text from the police saying temporary traffic lights were going up."

"We went down there that afternoon and started slow-walking in front of the trucks—we've been doing it every day since."

Cuadrilla has been given use of one lane of the road for several hours a day. Tina said, "One of our signs tells motorists, 'Your traffic jam today was brought to you courtesy of Cuadrilla Resources'."

Protest camps have been a focal point of resistance at

ONE OF the 'slow walking' protests

sites marked for fracking.

Tina said, "Here the opposition is so ingrained that we have enough people living locally who can disrupt and delay drilling."

Unions

"But we do need help, especially from the trade unions."

"We want construction unions to impose a 'green ban' like they did in Australia in the past—to strike to stop

projects that are bad for the environment."

Tina added, "We've asked people to tell the primary building contractor AE Yates not to take part. They are a local company and will worry about losing business."

"They've already said they'll stop operating on Saturdays until the protests are 'dealt with'."

There has been no fracking in Britain since 2011,

largely due to widespread opposition.

But the Tories are determined to overcome that and grant licences across England and Wales.

Fracking is dangerous for those who live nearby and a disaster for the climate.

The fights in Lancashire and North Yorkshire will set a precedent.

We must make sure it is the right one.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Hundreds protest in Sherwood Forest

OVER 300 people protested against fracking at the village of Edwinstowe in Sherwood Forest last Saturday.

Gas firm Ineos has been granted licences to carry out fracking across the North East Midlands and South Yorkshire, and is trying to carry out seismic tests.

There was a great turnout from across the region, where anti-fracking groups are being set up.

Some 40 people also met in the Derbyshire village of Marsh Lane where Ineos has identified a site to carry out test drilling.

They are planning a local protest on 31 January when Ineos plans a local "consultation event" to try and sell fracking.

James Eaden

YORKSHIRE

Solidarity day for Misperton camp

ACTIVISTS PLAN to hold a solidarity day on 5 February at Kirby Misperton Protection Camp in North Yorkshire.

Support has poured into the camp, set up against potential fracking at a nearby site. There will be a reception from 11am with food, a rally at 12 noon and other events through the day.

Kim Hunter

●For a solidarity sheet or to book a speaker for your group contact scarboroughfrackfree@gmail.com

Camp location: Kirby Misperton Rd, YO17 6UE. Cheques to Kirby Misperton Protection Camp, c/o Clock House, Little Barugh, Malton, YO17 6UY

RETAIL WORKERS



Cops protect the posh store

Top tips for fighting back

AROUND 100 people joined a protest outside Harrods in west London last Saturday.

They were demanding the department store pays its restaurant workers the whole service charge

Harrods bosses are under pressure and want to stop the United Voices of the World (UVW) union from organising.

Cops protected the store and arrested four protesters, including UVW general secretary Petros Elia.

●Send messages of solidarity to petros@uvwunion.org.uk Longer version on socialistworker.co.uk Slaving at the Stoves of the rich, turn to pages 10&11

IT WORKERS

Shutdown at Fujitsu office

IT SERVICE workers at Fujitsu in Manchester were set to strike this Thursday and Friday and then on Monday, Thursday and Friday of next week.

The Unite union members are fighting on a number of issues including low pay, pension cuts and job security. The firm plans big job cuts, and has sacked union rep Lynne Hodges.

Their planned action comes after nine previous strike days and action short of a strike is ongoing in between.

●To donate to the strike fund, download a leaflet and collection sheet or send a message of support go to bit.ly/2juvOPP

POSTAL WORKERS

Stand firm on pensions

THE CWU union has warned Royal Mail bosses that it could ballot for industrial action over pensions.

Royal Mail bosses have threatened that they could replace workers' "defined benefit" scheme with a worse "defined contribution" one.

The union must not agree to changes that would see workers lose out.

LGBT+

Protest for trans prisoners

LGBT+ CAMPAIGNERS have called solidarity protests on Sunday of next week following the death of a trans woman prisoner in an all-male prison.

Jenny Swift died in HMP Prison Doncaster, South Yorkshire, on 30 December last year.

Her death came after the Tories had pledged to introduce safeguards for

trans prisoners. The protests will take place outside HM Prison in north London and Doncaster. They coincide with the International Day of Solidarity With Trans Prisoners.

●Go to London Vigil for International Trans Prisoner Day of Action and Solidarity and Solidarity With Trans Prisoners: Noise Demo at HMP Doncaster on Facebook

EDUCATION

UCU UNION

Support left lecturers

ELECTIONS ARE on in the UCU union and the UCU Left, which Socialist Worker supports, is standing several candidates.

Jo McNeill is standing for general secretary against incumbent Sally Hunt. Jo told Socialist Worker there has been a lack of an "effective strategy" in disputes.

Carlo Morelli is standing for vice president. He told Socialist Worker, "We need a member-led union that will campaign seriously to stop the attacks on education."

The ballot opens on 1 February and closes on 1 March. ●Go to votejo4gensec.com Carlo Morelli 4 UCU Vice President on Facebook

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Walkout by TAs in Derby

TEACHING assistants (TAs) in Derby struck for two days last week in their battle to reverse pay cuts.

Labour-run Derby City Council imposed new contracts on the TAs last summer. The move saw their pay plummet by up to £500 a month.

Targeted

Strikers targeted one city ward to gather support for their fight and build pressure on the council.

For months Labour Party politicians and activists have been silent about the disgraceful attack their city council colleagues have unleashed on the TAs.

But Labour left group Momentum Derbyshire finally came out with a statement in support of

the TAs last week after months of debate.

The Unison union represents around 1,200 TAs in Derby.

No more strikes had been called as Socialist Worker went to press.

Meanwhile, in County Durham the Labour council is pushing the same attack

But the TAs' rank and file group, which helped temporarily beat back the attack with strikes, is continuing to organise.

Durham TAs were due to be sacked and rehired on new contracts from this year but the attack is on hold while fresh talks take place.

The rank and file committee will push for more industrial action if those talks do not bring pay scale regrade, without pay cuts.

Socialist Worker appeal

Thanks to all our readers and supporters for donating to our 2016 Socialist Worker appeal

We reached £ £126,011.44, which breaks through our target of £125,000.

If you would like to donate to help us keep covering the stories of struggle and solidarity go to socialistworker.co.uk/appeal

Or call 020 7840 5620

Shutdown shows power of workers

Transport strikes have hit bosses where it hurts, report Raymie Kiernan and Dave Sewell

THE POWER of the working class was clearly on display this week. Strikes by Southern Rail, London Underground and British Airways cabin crew workers showed their ability to bring the system to a standstill.

Workers stood together united, defying the false divisions bosses push. And unofficial solidarity action strengthened the action on the Tube.

Hundreds of roads were gridlocked by traffic on Monday as a Tube station workers' strike closed dozens of stations and led to severe disruption on every line.

London's Labour mayor Sadiq Khan claimed scabs had managed to keep over

60 percent of stations open, congratulating them.

But this looks to be false as all the key interchange stations had no Tube service. Long queues for buses were seen everywhere.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said, "It does no one any favours for TfL to openly lie about how many Tube services are running."

"It just piles more people into stations that are already dangerously overcrowded."

Other rail services were also overwhelmed.

Clapham Junction in south London had to be evacuated due to overcrowding.

Highlighted

On the Victoria and Piccadilly

lines Tube drivers refused to run trains and cross picket lines. They highlighted the unsafe conditions without proper staffing in stations.

One Brixton station worker said, "This is reasonable and in line with safety. If anything goes wrong on the train the drivers expect station staff to come on and help."

The 24-hour strike by RMT and TSSA union members is over the impact of nearly 900 job cuts on stations and the closure of all ticket offices.

"In every station now it's minimum staffing numbers," RMT rep Phil told Socialist Worker. "It means the safety of staff and passengers is being put in jeopardy by the bosses."

"Other staff that are getting employed are on less money and not getting the safety critical training they should be getting. They're not allowed to go on platforms and deal with any incident that may occur."

"Bosses said they were offering an additional 500 jobs. However there are already 450 vacancies, so really they're offering 50 jobs and they are on the lower grade that is not safety critical."

Condemn

Mayor Khan condemned the strikes as "causing misery to millions of Londoners" but he is in charge of Transport for London (TfL) and could easily sort the mess out.

As chair of TfL Khan could argue to fund the jobs needed to ensure safer conditions for passengers.

Phil said, "The strike really needs escalating and new dates called as soon as possible if management won't budge."

"Instead of just 24 hours these need to be 48 or 72-hour strikes and, where possible, coordinated with the Aslef union."

British Airways cabin crew



WORKERS ARE paid a pittance

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

BA pay walkout is a flying success

ALMOST 3,000 workers kept in poverty by millionaire bosses kicked back at one of Britain's biggest firms on Tuesday and Wednesday. British Airways' (BA) "Mixed Fleet" cabin crew walked out after they were offered a raise of just 6p an hour.

Pickets waved red Unite union flags and homemade placards at sites around airports across Britain. They chanted, "Low pay no way" and called for the firm's top bosses to be slung out.

One picket held up the results of surveys revealing that 84 percent of cabin crew had suffered ill health due to financial pressure and half had worked second

jobs. Another simply challenged boss of BA's parent firm IAG, Willie Walsh, to "Show me the fucking money".

One picket at Hatton Cross in London Heathrow airport told Socialist Worker, "BA made £2.3 billion last year. Willie Walsh alone took home £8 million."

"And they're paying us £12,000 to do a job they advertise at £21,000. When you add the tiredness, the time you have to go without eating on flights, it's just not acceptable."

"I'm one of many crew who have come down on their day off," added Hannah. "People feel so strongly because our

pay is so disgusting."

Shane said, "By half way through the month people are left with just £100 left to live on."

Grinding poverty leads to a high staff turnover. "It's upsetting," said Sam. "You work with someone and they're brilliant, and then they go because the company has designed it that way."

"Whenever people are joining the union there's people leaving too."

Charlie added, "They tell themselves that people who'll leave soon won't resist."

"But when they stopped the union going to the entrance courses for new workers it showed what they really think—



Solidarity on the London Underground picket line at Brixton station

New year, new strikes on Southern to defend safety

TRAIN DRIVERS shut down Southern Rail on Tuesday. Aslef union members were holding the first of three days of strikes this week over bosses' fast and loose attitude to safety.

Nothing moved on the busy south east commuter network. Workers showed their power to fight Southern parent company Govia

Thameslink Railway's imposition of driver only operation (DOO).

"The real issue at the heart of this dispute is that the government—through its agents at Southern—is trying to impose job cuts and safety cuts," Aslef president Tosh McDonald told Socialist Worker.

Govia has been hired >>>continued on page 18